

TONY NERTOLI: Welcome and thank you for coming. We've invited you two times to different conventions and you were not able to attend, and we thank you for giving us a chance to hear us. And I've been associated with this organization for a long time, and some board members that are here, and some of the members of the organization quite eloquently can speak for themselves, I'm sure. But I have several concerns, but I guess the thing that I would most like you to walk away with is the feeling that I don't have right now, is the value of this program to the communities that we live in, and that we serve and that we are a part of. One of the opportunities you have with us is as talking to these fine people here, and talking to me, I have a unique role. I'm not just a director that sits in an ivory tower, I drive the trucks, do the tailgates and certify and I deliver the food to the homes.

And I have a unique chance to get a feeling for this program from us. I realize that because of your position, you are not able to come out, but again I will extend to you from the Sault Ste Marie Tribe to come see us. And one of the things that again I would ask is, that you get a good feeling for what we are and who we are and how good this program is. You administer a very fine program and it works. There are things that we would like to add and like to do, and I will express myself on more than one occasion on this. But what I am looking at is, couple of things I have been asked to bring you. And basically what we are looking at is, in terms of the funding, and we are looking at administrative costs. And within that, and I'm looking at Tom's presentation and he gave me a letter to look at, and we are not only looking at it is not only as a hope to take home -- it is a small program. It has people, and up to a large program like Joe has and Red has, Tom has some of these other people, real large ones, with three to ten thousand people, all the way down to the small programs that has people. And also, the other thing I'm looking at is the nutrition education component, the way it's funded.

In all honesty, I'm diabetic, so obviously I'm not slim, so you know what I'm talking about. It's a life-long battle, and my grandmother died as the result of this. I'm and I lived three years longer than she did. Back in the s when she was first diagnosed as being diabetic, we were poor, so we didn't have the money to have insulin. Also, I'm well aware of the meaning of diabetes in a family. I have it and my brother did too, and it cost him his life at years old. So, I'm, well aware of the health statistics. I'm not projected to get much over , in terms of the actuaries for Native people. We are looking at nutrition education, and how important it has become within the program. And the fact that in terms of it, I know Red's agency out here and Darlene the administrator is helping. But as important as it is, and in the Food Package Review, I think the food itself, when you look at it is excellent food, but I'd like to see some changes in it. I have -- I was going to tell you that as part of a prime vender in the midwest, how good it was -- I think it's in the southwest Nez Perce region, and doing a good job.

One of the nice things about it, until this morning we've been back to the old warehouse project, we didn't get any fresh fruit or produce, and we've not yet produced any of our frozen product. And we've always complied with the rules and regulations. In terms of what I'm asking is that you come to know us and how important this is to us. And as much as we are supposed to, we see a service and everything promoted to us. At this time, my tribe and the adjoining tribes don't feel we are of a

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priority of the USDA. What I'd like to see is more foods commercially labeled. I think the food package review does an excellent job, but if I had a bone to pick with it, we have to eliminate food to get more food. That shouldn't be a part of the food package review. We should not only be looking at keeping existing foods, but adding new ones. I know you have heard of the traditional foods, and more of that later on. I want to thank you for the opportunity, and this is what I appreciate the most is the opportunity for you to be here with us and give us time to speak. And I know my fellow program directors and other tribes are definitively going to do that. Thank you, very much.

DARLENE BARNES: Next.